

EXHIBITION
OF
BRONZES AND PAINTINGS
BY
ANTOINE LOUIS BARYE

MARCH 11 TO MARCH 27
INCLUSIVE



NEW YORK
THE GROLIER CLUB
1909

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THE man of genius whose work is represented in this exhibition enjoyed an inspiration rare in any epoch but never, from the earliest times, without its zealous followers. In nearly every great school there have been artists to whom the appeal of the animal as a subject for treatment has been as urgent as the appeal of the human figure has been to the majority of their fellows. One of the earliest masterpieces in the history of sculpture is that relief, of Assyrian origin, now in the British Museum, which portrays a wounded lioness on the verge of its last agony. The horse was modeled with peculiar knowledge and enthusiasm by the Greeks and the taste, if not the power, developed in their world, was revived in that of the Romans. In more modern periods the same sympathetic feeling for the noblest of quadrupeds is observed, and, indeed, the animal, wild or domestic, reappears again and

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again in the works of the masters. The insatiable curiosity of Leonardo wreaks itself on strange beasts; Rembrandt, in one of the most interesting of his drawings, gives you the portrait of an elephant; the robust style of Rubens is flung magnificently over the hurly-burly of form involved in a lion hunt, and so, through countless phases, an influence persists down to our own day. Antoine Louis Barye is an honorable figure in a long line of artists whose gifts have been dedicated to the interpretation of the carnivora and those four-footed creatures which have been tamed by man.

Born in Paris in 1795, he came to manhood at a time and amid circumstances exceptionally favorable to the growth of his artistic predilections. In the clash of the Napoleonic wars men's minds turned naturally enough to themes of wild violence. The typical academician of that period pursued, it is true, the even tenor of his way, and, in fact, under the empire, found his path made doubly smooth. But there were electric forces in the air and these

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were destined, sooner or later, to promote rebellion against pseudo-classicism and the rule of thumb generally. The possessor of a literary or artistic temperament was stirred by the emotions of the man of action, and these were bound to find an outlet. Thus germinated the passion for a new ideal of beauty and for individual expression which culminated in the formation of the romantic school. The painters of 1830 established their tradition, consciously or unconsciously, on a basis not simply of artistic but of political and social feeling. The life-blood of France was re-invigorated; men used their limbs with a new energy. The scales fell from their eyes, and if they saw visions and dreamed dreams they also looked out upon the visible world with a keener zest and a wider range of sympathies. They obeyed, moreover, the dictates of their own characters. Gericault exercised the faculties of a realist with a dramatic turn of mind. Delacroix, avid of the thing that he could see and touch, was nevertheless impelled to bathe it in the glamour of romance. De-

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camps, when he turned from landscape, from Oriental caravans, from Italian peasants, and the like, would paint monkeys as human beings, giving free play to the vein of satire in his nature. What of Barye, who was of their generation and in harmony with their broad spirit? He gave himself first and last to the expression of the truth, presenting it in his art without the intervention of any sentiment, romantic or otherwise.

The story of his career is one of unremitting application to the lessons of nature. His father was a silversmith, and in his youth he served the apprenticeship of a craftsman. In the workshop of Fourier he learned how to work in the precious metals, and it may be noted in passing that down to the day of his death he preserved the aptitudes of the goldsmith. Some of his statuettes might have easily been produced by a disciple of Cellini. But Barye soon craved a wider field of activity and found the key to it in that impulse which drove him to the Jardin des Plantes. Frequenting the collection of wild animals there,

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absorbed in contemplation of their traits, he proceeded to observe them both as an artist and as a naturalist. To Delacroix's instinct for the sensuous beauty of the leopard or the tiger he joined a scientist's inquisitiveness as to the springs of action in those lithe, gleaming bodies. He studied the movement of the muscles under the rippling skin, he noted every nuance of expression about the mouths and eyes of his great cats. He watched them feeding, or moving with their ceaseless restlessness up and down the cage, or lying in ineffably graceful repose. He marked the reference of action to emotion, so synthesizing his observations that when he came to paint one of his water-colors or to model one of his bronzes he made his lion or panther, his tiger or crocodile, an astounding unit of form and feeling. The tread of one of his tigers is full of power and menace. The whole body seems to quiver. No beast of his is immobile, unless, perchance, he wishes it to be so; and even then one is always aware, as in the presence of the living animal, of an extraordinary latent elasticity.

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Not the Assyrian relief already mentioned, not any triumph of Greek plastic art, is more vitalized than is one of these masterpieces of Barye. His works have in them a spark of that life which makes a thrilling mystery of the depths of the jungle. Like Blake, with his "Tiger! Tiger! burning bright," this artist flashes upon the imagination an authentic image of terror and beauty.

He could do this, in the first place, because he knew his subjects so well, because he had got, so to say, under their skins. The value of the truth in his work is transcendent. But if his pictures and sculptures are to be treasured it is also because they give expression to a great artistic personality, to a man with the secret of style. He is not content to make a realistic portrait of one of his models. He must caress that portrait with an individualizing touch, he must determine its outlines and its effect in the mass so that it will conform to his sense of design. It is interesting to note, too, that you may turn a bronze of Barye's about, looking at it from every

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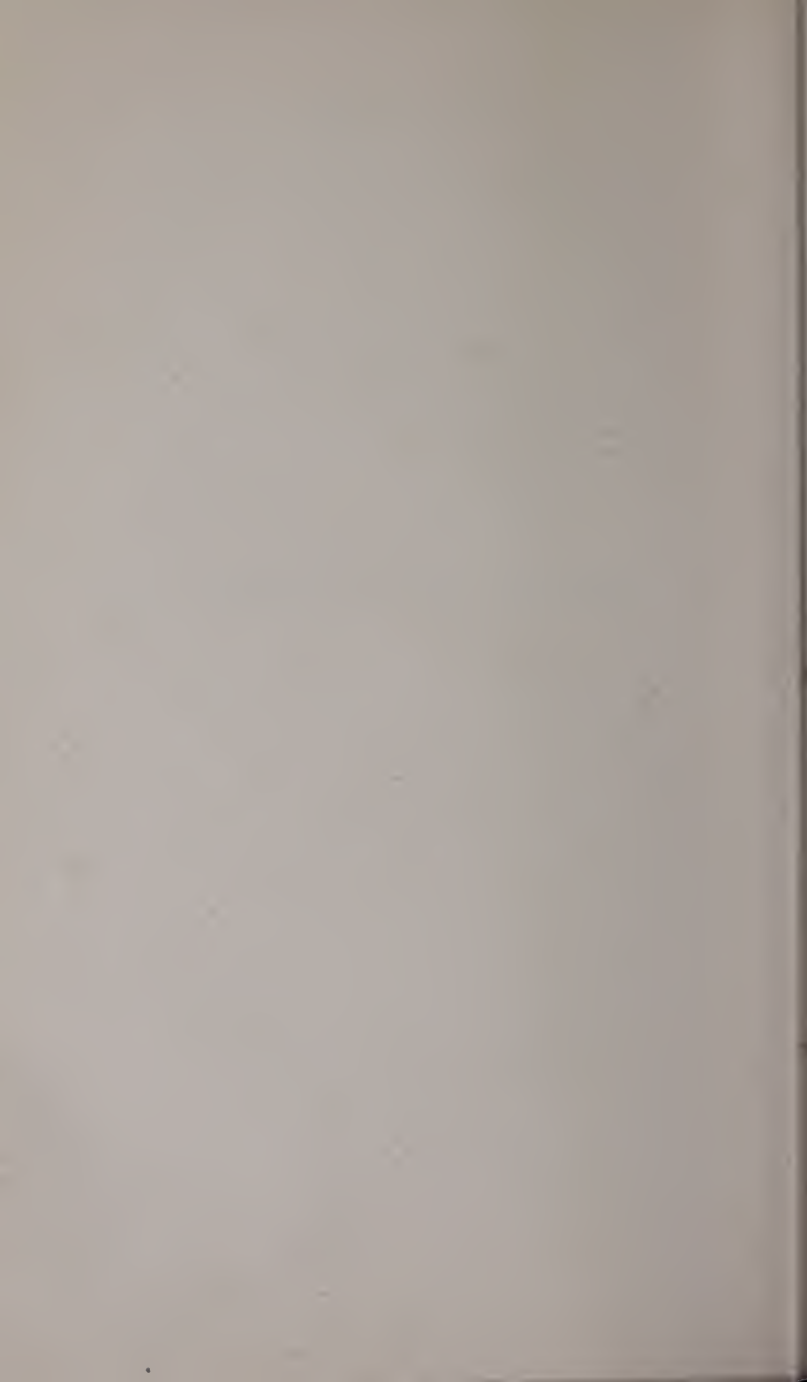
point of view, and always it is interesting, as the animal itself would be, moving hither and yon. There is a wonderful boldness, there is a kind of grand simplicity, in the art of Barye; but he is a subtle master, one whose work, no matter how spontaneous it may seem to be, leaves invariably an impression of artistic construction, of delicately wrought composition.

It took his countrymen some time to realize what he was driving at and to do him honor. In the competitions which he entered at the *École des Beaux Arts* as a young man the prize would again and again be awarded to some rival now unknown to fame. He was sorely tried and must at times have reached the brink of despair. He was, however, no less tenacious than modest, and after years of patient waiting he had his reward. Discerning patrons entered his life, some of them, like the Duke of Orléans, well qualified to make his talent known, and little by little public appreciation drew him from the obscurity in which academic authorities would have been satisfied to leave him. Monumental bronzes of his were erected in

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Paris and elsewhere, his works executed on a small scale figured in exhibitions and were presently acquired with enthusiasm by private collectors. When he died, in 1875, he died in the knowledge that his rank as a great artist had been fixed, and ever since his renown has increased. It is good to know that American connoisseurs were quick to perceive his merit and that his art is finely represented in this country.

**CATALOGUE OF
BRONZES AND PAINTINGS**



CATALOGUE

BRONZES

- 1 Arab killing lion
- 2 Tatar warrior. (Arabesque base)
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- 3 Gaston de Foix. 1838
- 4 Charles VII (The Victorious)
(Proof No. 10.) 1838
- 5 Napoleon. (Designed for the City
of Grenoble.) *Modern*
- 6 Theseus fighting Centaur. 1850
- 7 Theseus fighting the Minotaur.
(Proof No. 5.) 1838
- 8 "Amazon." (In costume of 1830)
184—
- 9 Monkey mounted on gnu. (Proof
No. 2.) 1842

BRONZES

- 10 Seated lion. (Tuileries.) 1836
- 11 Seated lion. (No. 2.) 1841
- 12 Seated lion. (Small; new model)
- 13 Seated lion. (Small)
- 14 Lion and serpent. (Tuileries)
1832-33
- 15 Lion and serpent. (Uplifted paw)
1832-33
- 16 Lion devouring hind. 1837
- 17 Tiger devouring gazelle. 1834
- 18 Lion walking. 1835-36
- 19 Tiger walking. 1835-36
- 20 Lion walking. (Terra cotta; new
model)
- 21 Two young lions. 1835
- 22 Lioness standing. (New model)
- 23 Senegal lioness
- 24 Algerian lioness
- 25 Sleeping jaguar

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- 26 Jaguar standing. (Reduction)
1840
- 27 Jaguar walking. (Reduction)
1840
- 28 Jaguar devouring agouti. 1847
- 29 Jaguar devouring crocodile.
1850-55
- 30 Panther catching stag
- 31 Tiger devouring gavial. (Reduction.) 1831
- 32 Panther reclining
- 33 Tunisian panther. 1840
- 34 Indian panther. 1840
- 35 Reclining panther holding stag. 1839
- 36 Panther pouncing on civet-cat
- 37 Tiger overpowering stag. (Reduction of the group in stone at Lyons, France.) 1839
- 38 Elephant crushing tiger. 1837

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- 39 Senegal elephant. (Aluminum)
Modern
- 40 Senegal elephant. (Bronze)
- 41 Cochinchina elephant. *Modern*
- 42 African elephant
- 43 Asian elephant. 1833
- 44 Algerian dromedary
- 45 Algerian dromedary. (Small)
- 46 Group of bears. 1833
- 47 Bear in tree eating owl
- 48 Seated bear. 1834
- 49 Bear standing. 1831
- 50 Wolf holding stag by throat
- 51 Stag, hind, and faun
- 52 Buck, doe, and two fauns
- 53 Listening stag. (Proof No. 36)
1838
- 54 Stag with raised leg. (Proof No. 40)
- 55 Stag walking. (Proof No. 16)

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- 56 Wounded stag
- 57 Faun scratching itself. *Modern*
- 58 Faun reclining. (Proof No. 8)
- 59 "Kevel"
- 60 Ethiopian gazelle
- 61 Wolf walking
- 62 Bull. 1841
- 63 Prancing bull. 1841
- 64 Bull overcome by bear. 1839
- 65 Turkish horse
- 66 Half-blood horse with raised head.
(Reduction)
- 67 Half-blood horse with lowered head
- 68 Ratel robbing nest
- 69 Wolf taken in trap
- 70 Dachshund
- 71 English dachshund
- 72 Two dogs after pheasant. (Proof
No. 5)

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- 73 Two dogs running
- 74 King Charles spaniel. (Silver)
Modern
- 75 Andirons decorated with two dachshunds
- 76 Seated cat
- 77 Seated hare. *Modern*
- 78 Rabbit with ears erect
- 79 Startled rabbit
- 80 Rabbit with ears down
- 81 Crocodile
- 82 Stork on back of tortoise
- 83 Hercules carrying boar. (Silver)
Modern
- 84 Roman jester. *Modern*
- 85 Juno
- 86 Chimera
- 87 Greek candelabra surmounted by stork

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- 88 Pair candlesticks decorated with leaf-age
- 89 Pair Greek candlesticks with antique medallions
- 90 Pheasant. *Modern*
- 91 Wounded pheasant. *Modern*
- 92 Eagle and serpent. 1824-5

BAS-RELIEFS

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- 94 Running elk
- 95 Virginia stag
- 96 Brach hound pointing
- 97 "Genette" carrying bird
- 98 Leopard. 1831
- 99 Panther. 1831
- 100 Virginia hart
- 101 Eagle and chamois

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